



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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The return of five additional vessels to the California sardine fleet has been arranged by the Navy through the War Shipping Administration, the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries said today. The return of four other vessels for this fleet was announced last week.

The vessels, known as purse seiners, are among the most productive fishing craft. Typically, they are 70 feet long and have 200 horsepower diesel engines. The annual production of such vessels is about 6,000,000 pounds of fish, each.

The fishing fleet to which these vessels are to be returned is one of the most important in the country. It produces approximately 25 percent, in weight, of all fish caught in U. S. and Alaskan waters together.

The pilchard, which is caught by this fleet, is usually canned as the California sardine. It is also the source of the vitamin-rich oil which has generally supplanted the cod-liver oil formerly imported from Norway and fish meal which is an essential ingredient of poultry feed.

The pilchard season, which ended last February, resulted in a catch which was 20 percent lower than in the previous season. The reduction was largely due to the shortages of vessels and manpower.